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RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S CRITICISM ON UTILITARIAN APPROACH OF THE SOCIETY
AND THE UNIVERSAL VALUE

S.RAVINDAR¹, A.CRUIZ THIVAGARAN²

¹Assistant Professor of English,
Knowledge Institute of Technology, Kakapalayam (PO), Salem (DT). Tamilnadu, India.

²Assistant Professor of English,
JP College of Engineering, Ayikudy (PO), Thirunelveli (DT). Tamilnadu, India.



S.RAVINDAR



A.CRUIZ THIVAGARAN

ABSTRACT

The play "Red Oleanders" is first written in Bengali language under the title "RaktaKarabhi". Tagore conveys the message that the Utilitarian approach and vast industrialization throughout the world would result in diminishing human compassion and cause Ecological Imbalance. So he used characters as a metaphor of human instincts such as greed, power, envy, love, trust, and sacrifice. The play Red oleanders is a One-act play which follows the Aristotle's rules. He follows three unities (unity of time, action and place). All the action in the play takes place in the King's Palace and the play starts and ends within a day. Nandhini is the major character in the play. She is considered as the mouth piece of Tagore. She has every quality of heroine. In this play she talks against the Slavery system. Every single male character in the play likes her except Gokul one of the digger. Everyone likes her boldness and her spirit, they are also attracted by her beauty. Tagore portrays Nandhini as a typical Indian Women. She is doing her duty well for her lover Ranjan. Even her death is symbolically said, at the end people rebel against the King. Tagore symbolically used the theme of Slavery in order to create awareness among the Indians to fight for their Freedom. Nandhini is the metaphor of Love and Sacrifice. Bishu is the symbol of Trust and Pure, King is the symbol of Power and Jealous, the Governor is the symbol of Envy and Greed. Totally Red Oleander is the tragic Play which has the theme of Love, Friendship and Slavery. So the Play is considered as the "Criticism of Life".

Key words: Bangali Language, Utilitarian Approach, Industrialization, Human Compassion, Slavery System, Trust and Pure and Criticism of Life.

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INTRODUCTION

Drama plays an important role in literature. It presents fiction or fact in a form that could be acted before an audience. A play has a plot, characters, dialogue. The play revealed its qualities only in the stage. Drama, like other arts, it represents the life in little. Dryden also said drama as "just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject for the delight

and instruction of mankind" (14). But all art is directly or indirectly colored by the artist's personality, and drama does not promise to be entirely faithful or fact.

It is a portrait not a photograph; a version, not a reproduction. It is the dramatist's "*Criticism of Life*". Totally drama is the product of imagination working upon experience and observation, whatever the theme may be. Drama represents the life of the age. It portrays the life of the people and criticise them. The restoration period is the best example, because the dramatist of that age criticise the society clearly. They used the term "Comedy of Manners" to show the stupidity of upper class people. Likewise in Indian writers also wrote plays to express their feelings. Among them Tagore is the one who clearly criticise the Utilitarian approach of the society which eventually destroy the universal value.

Rabindranath Tagore was born on 7th may 1861, Sobriquet Gurudev. He is considered by many to be an Indian writer who has made Literary Impact on both East and West. He is the first Non- European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature for his collection of self-translated poem Gitanjali in 1913. He was a prolific writer. He modernized Bengali literature by spurning rigid classical forms and resisting linguistic strictures. His novels, stories, plays, essays talks about the topics of politics and personal. The Home and the World are his well-known work deals about the affection between husband and wife, and about the freedom movement. He showed his patriotism not only in his writings but in his real life too. His Anti-nationalistic views made him to denounce the RAJ Award which was given by the British Government. Many Indian writers of his time try to create awareness about freedom movement. But among them Tagore is different, because he created awareness among the people with artistic taste. He is the pioneer of Bengali Renaissance in the field of literature.

In his 154th birth anniversary, here is a list of five interesting things about Tagore. Tagore was born, according to the Gregorian calendar, on May 7 in 1861 - but according to the Bengali calendar, it was the 25th of Baishakh. Tagore's birth anniversary is widely celebrated by the Bengali community on Baisakh 25 - which coincides this year with May 9 - and 'Pachishe (25th) Baishakh is an important cultural occasion. This year too, top leaders like Prime Minister Narendra Modi and home minister Rajnath Singh paid their tributes to the poet on May 7, two days ahead of Baisakh 25. But for many, Gurudev's birth anniversary is on Saturday, according to the Bengali calendar.

When Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, he became the first non-European to win it. He was awarded the prize after the publication of his acclaimed collection of poems Geetanjali. Tagore was recognised, according to the Nobel committee's statement, "because of his profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, by which, with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought, expressed in his own English words, a part of the literature of the West" (32). Unfortunately, in 2004, the prize was stolen from the safety vault of Visva-Bharati University. Later, the Swedish Academy presented two replicas of the prize, one made of gold and the other of bronze, to Visva-Bharati University.

Criticism on Utilitarian Approach of the Society and the Universal Value

Visva-Bharati University was started in 1921 at Santiniketan. (Shutterstock)In an attempt to challenge conventional methods of classroom education, Tagore established a university of his own, where he wanted humanity to be studied "somewhere beyond the limits of nation and geography". Here, many classes are still held under trees in open fields. Visva-Bharati University was started in 1921 at Santiniketan in Bengal's Birbhum district. For setting up Visva-Bharati, declared a central university in May 1951, Tagore used the cash he received with the Nobel Prize and collected funds from around the world.

Most people know that Tagore wrote the national anthems of India and Bangladesh - 'Jana Gana Mana' and 'Amar Sonar Bangla' respectively. But few know that Sri Lanka's national anthem is based on a Bengali song originally written by Tagore in 1938. It was translated into Sinhalese and adopted as the national anthem in 1951. One of Tagore's students at Visva-Bharati University, Ananda Samarakoon, translated the lyrics of Nama Nama Sri Lanka Mata from Bengali to Sinhalese. Tagore is thus the only person to have composed the national anthems of three countries.

It's interesting to note the kind of relationship Tagore shared with Mahatma Gandhi and Albert Einstein. It was Tagore who conferred the title of 'Mahatma' on Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in 1915. But

experts have said that though Tagore admired Gandhi, he differed with him on certain issues. "Tagore admired Mahatma Gandhi immensely and expressed his admiration for his leadership time and again, but sharply differed with him when Gandhi was departing from adequate reasoning," economist Amartya Sen Once said (45).

In shed light on how after the Nepal-Bihar earthquake of 1934, Gandhi attributed the disaster to the practice of untouchability among Biharis. Gandhi had said the quake was "a divine chastisement for the great sin we have committed against those whom we describe as Harijans" (54). Though Tagore was opposed to untouchability, he found this argument on Gandhi's part irrational. The report said: "Tagore shot off a rebuttal on rationalist lines, with a request for it to be published in Gandhi's journal, Harijan. The letter expressed 'painful surprise' at 'this kind of unscientific view of things'. It was simply inaccurate, Gurudeb argued, to 'associate ethical principles with cosmic phenomena'." (88) To this Gandhi had replied that he felt phenomena like droughts, floods, earthquakes and the like, though they seem to have only physical origins, are somehow connected with man's morals.

Tagore met Albert Einstein four times between 1930 and 1931 and their conversations were marked "by their curiosity about the other's contributions, their pursuit of truth and their love of music" (68). According to a New York Times report, Tagore wrote about Einstein after their first meeting: "There was nothing stiff about him - there was no intellectual aloofness. He seemed to me a man who valued human relationship and he showed toward me a real interest and understanding" (145).

Three important ethical perspectives which often influence health systems discourse are: Utilitarianism, Liberalism and Communitarianism. Utilitarianism is an ethical theory (with classical antecedents) developed in the modern period by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-73) to promote fairness in British legislation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the interests of the upper classes tended to prevail and the sufferings of the lower classes were neglected. Bentham and Mill extended consideration to all persons--indeed, to all sentient beings--potentially affected by a given action. Bentham's motto was, "Each to count for one and none for more than one." In other words, no one's happiness should count for anything more than any other person's happiness.

Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that calls for putting benevolence into action. Utilitarianism is in a position to criticize harmful practices that have been regarded as "moral," rigid legalism of every sort and theories that make morality depend upon religion. It directs us to be concerned for the good of the whole, and to identify our own welfare with the good of the whole. Utilitarianism encourages us to explore the full range of consequences of our actions and encourages us that the hard trade-offs between different kinds of value can be humanely achieved. The hope of utilitarianism has been to provide a scientific method of decision making. One first calculates the expected consequences of alternative courses of action and chooses the one with the highest net utility.

In short, Utilitarianism argues that policies should be judged by their consequences and promotes the benefits of achieving the greatest good for the greatest number. Liberalism focuses on the importance of rights and opportunities of individuals more than the consequences to society as a whole. Communitarianism focuses on the qualities of the society in which people live (the community) and views the character of a society as dependent on the character of the individuals who compose it.

Rabindranath Tagore wanted to create awareness among the people about how slavery changes people and his envision about Western Capitalistic ideas and approaches changes the people. The play "Red Oleanders" is first written in Bengali language under the title "RaktaKarabhi". This work was written in 1924. In this work Tagore want to convey the message that the Utilitarian approach and vast industrialization throughout the world would resulting in diminishing human compassion and cause Ecological Imbalance.

So he used characters as a metaphor of human instincts such as greed, power, envy, love, trust, and sacrifice. The play Red oleanders is a One-act play which follows the Aristotle's rules. He follow's three unities (unity of time, action and place). All the action in the play take place in the King's Palace and the play starts and ends within a day.

Nandhini is the major character in the play. She is considered as the mouth piece of Tagore. She has every quality of heroine. In this play she talks against the Slavery system. Her motive was to create an awareness in the people of Yaksha Town where people digging the dark tunnels for gold. The dark tunnels symbolically represent the weakness of people, they are not aware of what happens in the society. Nandhini is portrait as strong women who really don't care for anybody.

Every single male character in the play likes her except Gokul one of the digger. Everyone like her boldness and her spirit, they are also attracted by her beauty. At the same time she is the women of kind heart too, she tells Kishor the little boy *"It break my heart to know that those brutes punish you"* (112). She was bold enough to talk against the King and she wants the King to realise that *"the death-wealth of the earth was not giving happy"*.

Another Mouth piece of Tagore was Bishu, a friend of Nandhini who indirectly spoke about the political situation in Bengal. In the play he first worked as a spy for the Governor. Later he was changed by Nandhini and supported her to do her job well. He often called Nandhini *"waker of my grief"*. It shows that Bishu was unwillingly worked for the Governor. He was in grief to turn against his people but Nandhini gave him boldness and faith, that's why he calls her like that. This play is also the symbol of true love and friendship. Nandhini loves a man named Ranjan. Who was also like Nandhini through the play he never appeared but we came to know that he was killed by the King.

Tagore portraits Nandhini as a typical Indian Women. She is doing her duty well for her lover Ranjan. King plays an important role in the play, he also like Nandhini. In the beginning he never comes out of the screen. It symbolically says that he was feared about reality and society. He is considered as a Frog in the well, his only world and concerns are all about gold (death wealth). He was afraid to face the society even though he was strong. He is the Metaphor of Power, Jealous and Envy.

Tagore used many Symbolic representations in this play. The Professor in the play called Nandhini *"The sunlight which cracked through the walls"* which means that she is trying to create awareness among the people about slavery and independence (freedom). The 'sunlight' is compared to her motives and the 'cracked' symbolically says that she is alone to achieve her motives. The professor also says that *"the gold which is you, the beautiful one, is not of dust, but of the light which owes any bonds"* (189). Which means that people in the town running behind the death wealth for their life? But Nandhini's motives are all not for her own good. She had done everything for the people of Yaksha town. So her motives and ideas are all called as 'gold' which we are not found in the dust but it's a god's gift.

Even her death is symbolically said, at the end people rebel against the King. When she knows about the death of her lover Ranjan, she rushes to see his body, the Governor was very angry at Nandhini because she is the main cause for the revolution take place in Yaksha town. The Governor had the habit of keeping Kunda flower's in his Sword, at the end the White Kunda flower was turned into red which means that Nandhini's blood was dipped the flower. She was killed by the Governor. Moreover, the title Red Oleander is the symbolic one. Red is the symbol of Love, Danger and Anger. The play is written before the independence. Tagore symbolically used the theme of Slavery in order to create awareness among the Indians to fight for their Freedom.

Conclusion

Nandhini is the metaphor of Love and Sacrifice. Bishu is the symbol of Trust and Pure, King is the symbol of Power and Jealous, the Governor is the symbol of Envy and Greed. Totally Red Oleander is the tragic Play which has the theme of Love, Friendship and Slavery. The play was written in 1924, before Independence. It in directly create an awareness about freedom and give an vivid image about the condition of the Indians who are under in the rule of British Imperialism and it also show the struggles which was faced by the freedom fighter's of his age through the character of Nandhini. Totally he criticise the society of his time, it is helpful for us know about the condition of particular time with literary interest. So the Plays are considered as the *"Criticism of Life"*. In short Tagore criticises we must live with the five universal Human Values of Love, Peace, Truth, Right Conduct and Non-violence, residewithin each one in full potential, like a seed under the ground waiting to sprout.

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